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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/851,456	05/08/2001	Stephen Paul Zimmerman	8074M	3630

27752 7590 10/21/2003

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EXAMINER

BECKER, DREW E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1761

DATE MAILED: 10/21/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/851,456

Applicant(s)

ZIMMERMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Drew E Becker

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15-18 and 22-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15-18 and 22-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The declaration filed on June 2, 2003 under 37 CFR 1.131 is sufficient to overcome the Bezek et al and McNeel et al references.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement filed October 1, 2001 fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609 because the three "Sample" references do not include dates.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claim 22 refers to an "engagement span". However, the specification does not describe what an engagement span is, or how it is calculated. Although an "engagement span" is mentioned on page 9, line 22 of the specification, it is not clear how it was calculated. Page 9 merely recites "The engagement span (ES) is about 90% of the vertex span, more preferably about 70%, most preferably 50% as

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shown in Figures 3a through 3d." without disclosing how one of these would be chosen, or when.

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

7. Claim 22 recites an "engagement span". It is not clear what an "engagement span" is, or how it is calculated.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

9. Claims 1-4, 9, 12, 16-17, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hreschak [Des. 212,070].

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Hreschak teaches a snack product comprising a body curved about a first axis thus forming a dip containment region with an open end, sides which are not parallel to the axis, restriction of movement to the sides and rear, an engagement span which is 90% of the vertical span, the axis being perpendicular to the open end, sidewalls, a restricted end which is less than 75% of the open end width, a vertical taper of less than 45°, and a varying radius of curvature along its length (Figures 1-4). The recitation "stackable" has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. See *In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951). Regardless, nearly any snack product, including Hreschak, would be capable of being stacked in some manner, for instance in a pile.

10. Claims 1-7, 9, 11-13, 15-18, and 22-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smietana [Pat. No. 4,915,964].

Smietana teaches a stackable snack piece comprising a body curved about a first axis, the curvature forming a dip containment region which restricts the dip in at least two directions, an open end perpendicular to the axis, a restricted end which restricts flow when tilted past 0°, the axis not being parallel to a side, a vertical span, sidewalls, a isosceles triangular shape, a vertical taper of 0-45°, the restricted end being less than 75% the width of the open end, a segment of a right cone, an engagement span less

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than 90% of the vertical span (Figure 21), a nested arrangement (Figure 7), a varying radius of curvature of 0.1-38.1 mm (column 6, line 70), and a width of approximately 75 mm (column 6, line 70).

11. Claims 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Bierschenk et al [Pat. No. 6,338,606].

Bierschenk et al teach a stack of nested snacks comprising a single nesting axis (Figure 9), each snack having a concavity forming a dip containment region (Figures 1-2), and an equal distance between the snacks (Figure 9).

12. Claims 1-4, 9, 12, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morales [Des. 383,589].

Morales teaches a stackable snack piece comprising a body curved about a first axis, a dip containment region, an open end perpendicular to the axis, a restricted end which restricts flow when tilted past 0°, a vertical span, sidewalls, a vertical taper between 0 and 45°, and an engagement span less than 90% the vertical span (Figure 1).

13. Claims 1-4, 9, 12, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tirillo [Pat. No. 5,997,921].

Tirillo teaches a stackable snack piece comprising a body curved about a first axis, a dip containment region, an open end perpendicular to the axis, a restricted end which restricts flow when tilted past 0°, a vertical span, sidewalls, a vertical taper between 0 and 45°, and an engagement span less than 90% the vertical span (Figure 1).

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

15. Claims 10-11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hreschak.

Hreschak teaches the above mentioned components. Hreschak does not mention a length of 30-110mm, a radius of curvature of 15-500mm, or an open end width of 15-75mm. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use these sizes in the snack product of Hreschak since snack chips, such as Doritos, Pringles, and Fritos; were commonly made in these sizes, since Hreschak simply does not mention a particular size, and since consumers preferred snack foods of this size as the snack foods fit into their hands more easily.

16. Claims 5-7 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hreschak as applied above, in view of Blish [Des. 166,524].

Hreschak teaches the above mentioned components. Hreschak does not teach an isosceles triangle shape. Blish teaches a food product with a dip containment region and an isosceles triangle shape (Figures 1-3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the shape of Blish into the food product of Hreschak since both are directed to scoop shaped foods, since Hreschak already had a

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generally triangular shape (Figure 1), and since an isosceles triangle shape was commonly used for snack food products as shown by Blish (Figures 1-3).

17. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hreschak as applied above, in view of Ipema [Des. 300,199].

Hreschak teaches the above mentioned components. Hreschak does not teach a segment of a right cone. Ipema teaches a scoop in the shape of a segment of a right cone (Figures 1-4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the shape of Ipema into the product of Hreschak since both are directed to scooping products, since Hreschak already included sidewalls and a curved scoop region (Figures 1-4), and since scoops commonly had the shape of a segment of a right cone, as shown by Ipema (Figures 1-4).

18. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hreschak as applied above, in view of Bierschenk et al.

Hreschak teaches the above mentioned components. Hreschak does not teach an equilateral triangle shape. Bierschenk et al teach a snack piece with an equilateral triangle shape (Figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the shape of Bierschenk et al into the snack product of Hreschak since both are directed to snack foods, since Hreschak already had a generally triangular shape (Figure 1), and since an equilateral triangle shape was commonly used for snack food products as shown by Bierschenk et al (Figure 1).

Response to Arguments

19. Applicant's arguments filed August 20, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that "engagement span" was adequately described. However, the specification does not describe what an engagement span is, or how it is calculated. Although an "engagement span" is mentioned on page 9, line 22 of the specification, it is not clear how it was calculated. Page 9 merely recites "The engagement span (ES) is about 90% of the vertex span, more preferably about 70%, most preferably 50% as shown in Figures 3a through 3d." without disclosing how one of these would be chosen, or how it would be calculated.

Applicants argue that Hreschak was not "stackable". However, nearly any snack product, including Hreschak, would be capable of being stacked in some manner. For instance, the snack products of Hreschak could have easily been stacked in a pile.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew E Becker whose telephone number is 703-305-0300. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8am-6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 703-308-3959. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1495.



Drew E Becker
Examiner
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10-14-03